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April 26, 2018

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Handwritten signature

March 20, 2017

Mayor, City Council and City Manager
P.O. Box 1088
Austin, Texas 78767

Dear Mayor and Council,

Thank you for past support of our Quality of Life Commission recommendations. We observed that last year's Council deliberation on our Quality of Life recommendations requested several changes to our budget development process. This included that our recommendations be tied to specific equity goals; that our recommendations be focused on program/policy objectives; and, that our budget request be done early in the city budget development calendar so that they may be considered for the proposed City Manager budget recommendation.

At yesterday's budget forecast work session, several Council members reiterated these requests. We are concerned that our need for resources to meet social and racial equity needs have been the "last-in" requests in the budget process tends to become a point of consternation on the part of the Council because at that time any available funds are all locked up. So it was refreshing to hear yesterday CM Kitchen's comment that our budget recommendations be considered as part of a base budget deliberation instead of an "add-on" budget request.

We are taking steps to comply with Council's wishes and intentions. We would like to ensure that the ground rules you are setting for us are equally being set for other budget requests coming from other social service agencies as well and not just targeted to the Quality of Life Commissions. If you are not going to rely on the Commissions' connectedness to community resources and knowledge of service providers and it is your intent is just to approve budget allocations without naming specific contractors, then it is incumbent that the appropriate City agencies have the technical, program, and community-based expertise to be able to vet and convert program goals and objectives into specific programs and services. We don't believe that city departments have the bandwidth and contracting capacity to do this in a timely, efficient, and effective way. There are millions of dollars in "no-bid" contracts and we don't think the Quality of Life Commission should only be singled out.

We look forward to discussing our community equity issues and resource requirements in the upcoming budget. Thank you for your support in addressing social and racial equity issues.

Jill Ramirez,
Chair, Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Advisory Commission

General categories

Sole sources

Budget toward outcome

Daryl Horton,
Chair, African American Resource Advisory Commission

Richard Jung
Chair, Asian American, Quality of Life Advisory Commission